

Discussion Questions and Boot Points for *Bobby Gilliam, Brave and Strong*

Information every adult needs to know.

Before you begin:

A Note to Parents and Caregivers: Although I use the swimsuit as a reference point for children in the story, I urge you to use the proper names of the body parts (chest, breasts, penis, and vagina) and be specific with your children as you discuss the story. You will increase your children's knowledge and give them clarity. Sexual abuse is confusing to us all and especially to children. Clear and accurate information from you, the parent or trusted adult, is the best protective defense for any challenge your child may face.

Suggested questions:

What was your favorite part of the story? Tell me about it. (Engage your child in conversation based on his response, and weave the following questions into your conversation as naturally as possible.)

Bobby dreams of being a pilot, surfer, and a soccer player—just like his dad. Who do you dream about becoming when you grow up? What kinds of jobs sound like fun to you?



Being intentional regarding building a relationship with our children is the best protection we can offer them against sexual abuse. Engaging our children in thoughtful questions, listening quietly to their responses, spending time with them, and giving them focused attention is easier said than done. Life is busy and nothing attacks relationship better than busy. Know your child and allow them to know you. Remember, relationship protects, relationship heals.

There are two scary characters in the story. Who are they?

Were the alien and Uncle Ralph scary at first?



Adult and teen perpetrators know how to lure and attract children. They are from every race, religion, and socio-economic background. We need to teach our children that sometimes “fun” people can do bad things, and that we want them to tell us if someone asks them to do anything that makes them feel uncomfortable.

What did the alien want Bobby to do?

What did Uncle Ralph want Bobby to do?

Is it okay for someone to ask you to keep a secret from your parents?



Sexual abuse relies on secrets. Perpetrators depend on children to keep secrets and they often test victims to see if they will keep a secret about something small or benign before they engage in abuse. Consider making secrets bad and surprises good in your family. You might say, “We have surprise parties and surprise gifts. Surprises are good. Secrets are not good. In our family, we are free to tell each other everything. We don’t keep secrets. If anyone wants you to keep secrets, come and tell us—like Bobby told his father about the alien and Uncle Ralph.”

How did Bobby feel when the alien wanted him to go away with him and play a secret game?

How did Bobby feel when Uncle Ralph showed him the video?



Children need to know if someone makes them feel unsafe, uncomfortable, or sick in their stomachs, they can tell us. Kids may not be able to describe why someone makes them feel unsafe, nor should they have to tell us why. We need to respect their instincts.

There are two safe characters in the story. Who are they?

How do you think Bobby felt when his dad put his arm around him after his nightmare?



Touching can be confusing to children and especially to victims of sexual abuse. Victims can feel shame if their body responds to the abuse. Their mind tells them one thing—this feels uncomfortable, and their body tells them another—this feels good. Our children need to be taught that touches should feel safe and should not make them feel funny or sick in their stomachs.

In the story, the alien asked Bobby to come away with him to his planet and play secret games. Bobby tells the alien “No!” Is it okay for you to tell people NO who want to play secret games that make you feel uncomfortable?

Bobby’s dad explains to Bobby that he might face a different kind of alien—a person who might show him videos he shouldn’t see or ask him to play secret games. What should you do if someone shows you inappropriate videos or asks you to play secret games?

Bobby's dad also tells him that no one is ever supposed to touch him where his swimsuit covers. Is it ever okay for someone to touch you where your swimsuit covers?

Is it okay for doctor to touch you where you swimsuit covers, during a checkup, with your parent's permission?

Is it okay to tell a person NO who wants to touch your body where your swimsuit covers?

Is it ever okay to touch someone else where their swimsuit covers?



As parents and caregivers, we must be intentional about teaching our children that they can say NO to uncomfortable conversation and inappropriate images and touch. So much of our child rearing involves teaching them to be obedient. "Now listen to grandma and grandpa, and do what they say." Or, "Do what the babysitter tells you to do." This can be confusing. Children must understand they are allowed to protect their minds and bodies from inappropriate words, images, and touches—they are allowed to yell NO!

What did the alien tell Bobby would happen to him if he didn't play with him?

What did Uncle Ralph tell Bobby he would do if Bobby told his dad about the inappropriate video?



People who violate often use tricks and threaten children to get them to do what they want and to keep quiet. Children must understand that we (the parent or caregiver) are capable of handling any threat a perpetrator makes, and that perpetrators lie. The best possible defense for any challenge our children may face is to reassure them that we are here to protect them, that we will believe them, and that they can tell us anything.

Was Uncle Ralph a stranger to Billy?



*We need to be prepared should a child disclose abuse to us. **Ninety percent of violated children are violated by someone they know, trust, and often love.** Chances are we will know, trust, and love the perpetrator as well. We must remain calm, listen to our child, and reassure him, just as Bobby's father did in the story. There will be time to react and take action later. Our child's physical and emotional care must be our first priority. For more information on what to do should your child disclose abuse, please click here: ["What if?"](#)*

When Bobby didn't want to see the video he ran into the bathroom and locked the door. What else could Bobby have done?

If a parent is not around and someone wants to show you inappropriate videos, speaks to you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable, or asks you to play a secret game, who else could you tell? If this happened at church, school, or at soccer camp, who would you tell? (Please make questions applicable to your child's life.)

Was Bobby's father mad at him when Bobby told him about the video Uncle Ralph wanted him to watch and the secrets Uncle Ralph wanted him to keep?



*Survivors of sexual abuse (and showing children pornography is sexual abuse) blame themselves. It is estimated only **1 out of every 10 survivors ever tell**. When we build a bridge of communication by addressing sexual abuse with our children, we take a proactive step toward giving them the freedom to tell.*

At the end of the story, we find out that Bobby didn't grow up to play soccer like his dad, but he became an architect. But how did Bobby grow up to be just like his dad? Hint: What is Bobby doing with his children on the last page?



Sexual abuse thrives in communities, organizations, churches, and families where there is ignorance and silence. Perpetrators target children who have no knowledge of their bodies and who have no knowledge of sexual abuse. By building a bridge of communication with your children, regarding this issue, you are minimizing the risk.

Thank you for sharing our message. You are brave. You are strong.



equipping parents. protecting kids.